

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** □ Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6062, the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2012.

The Federal justice grants reauthorized under this legislation provide critical funding to State and local jurisdictions in their efforts to combat crime.

Especially during periods of national budgetary constraints affecting the bottom lines of States and local governments, the Byrne JAG grants are particularly important. Across our Nation, many jurisdictions, to shore up their budgets, are actually laying off police officers. When many of our citizens are experiencing economic hardship, we must not add to their burden by allowing public safety to suffer.

H.R. 6062 reaffirms the Federal Government's commitment to assisting State and local governments in their effort to prevent and fight crime. But reauthorization of the Byrne JAG grant program is obviously just a first step. We must also follow through with actually appropriating sufficient funds for the program.

In addition, we should encourage allocation of grant funds to the full range of programs that State and local governments are allowed to fund. Under current law, State and local governments may use Byrne JAG funding for programs or projects that improve law enforcement efforts; prosecution and court programs; prevention and education programs; corrections and community corrections; drug treatment programs; planning, evaluation, and technology projects; and crime victim and witness programs.

Each of these are essential to a comprehensive effort to protect us from crime, and, therefore, all of them should receive significant funding under the Byrne JAG grant program. An imbalance in justice assistance funding creates an imbalance in anticrime efforts. Specifically, an appropriate amount of funding should be allocated to prevent crime, which will help reduce the amount of money needed to fund the after-crime cost of investigation, prosecution, incarceration, and victim assistance.

We must also assist State and local governments to fund public defender programs in recognition of the fact that the public is also protected from injustice when we safeguard the Sixth Amendment rights of our citizens.

Finally, it is essential that the full range of other programs that assist State and local public safety initiatives, including the COPS program, are adequately funded. The COPS program has funded the hiring of more than 123,000 State and local police officers and sheriff's deputies in communities across our Nation, and it has been proven to be extremely effective in reducing crime.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 6062, and I commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania

(Mr. Marino) for his work on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.R. 6062 so that we can reaffirm our commitment to funding public safety programs.